UNITED NATIONS **E**

Economic and Social Council

Distr.
GENERAL

E/1997/81
24 June 1997

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

Substantive session of 1997
Geneva, 30 June-25 July 1997
Item 9 of the provisional agenda*

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECLARATION ON THE GRANTING OF INDEPENDENCE TO COLONIAL COUNTRIES AND PEOPLES BY THE SPECIALIZED AGENCIES AND THE INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTIONS ASSOCIATED WITH THE UNITED NATIONS

Report of the President of the Council on consultations held with the Chairman of the Special Committee on the Situation with regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples

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* E/1997/100.

INTRODUCTION

1. At its substantive session of 1996, the Economic and Social Council adopted resolution 1996/37 of 26 July 1996 on the implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples by the specialized agencies and the international institutions associated with the United Nations. In paragraph 16 of that resolution, the Council requested its President to continue to maintain close contact on those matters with the Chairman of the Special Committee on the Situation with regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples and to report thereon to the Council.

2. At its fiftieth session, the General Assembly adopted resolution 51/141 of 13 December 1996, in paragraph 14 of which it requested the Council to continue to consider, in consultation with the Special Committee, appropriate measures for coordination of the policies and activities of the specialized agencies and other organizations of the United Nations system in implementing the relevant resolutions of the General Assembly.

3. Taking into account the above-mentioned resolutions, the President is of the view that the specialized agencies and international institutions associated with the United Nations should strengthen existing measures of support and formulate additional programmes of assistance to the Non-Self-Governing Territories. Most of these Territories are islands, small in size and population, geographically isolated and vulnerable to natural disasters, such as hurricanes and cyclones. They are also relatively undeveloped economically and therefore are particularly dependent on external assistance. The specialized agencies and other organizations of the United Nations system, as well as international and regional organizations, should therefore be invited to examine and review conditions in each of the Territories, commensurate with the pressing needs of the peoples concerned for increased transfer of resources, technology and know-how, and take appropriate measures to accelerate economic and social progress.

4. In accordance with the terms of Council resolution 1996/37, the President of the Council maintained close contact with the Chairman of the Special Committee during the period under review and, on the basis of those contacts and in the light of related developments, submits to the Council the observations set out below, with a view to facilitating Council consideration of the present item.

5. During the year, members of the Council and the Special Committee followed closely the work of their respective bodies relating to the item. The President considers it both useful and essential that such contacts and cooperation continue to be maintained and strengthened to mobilize the maximum possible assistance to the peoples of the remaining Non-Self-Governing Territories.

I. SUPPORT BY SPECIALIZED AGENCIES AND ORGANIZATIONS OF THE UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM TO NON-SELF-GOVERNING TERRITORIES

6. According to the information provided by specialized agencies and organizations of the United Nations system, during the period under review a number of specialized agencies and organizations have continued to extend assistance to the peoples of Non-Self-Governing Territories, in response to the relevant resolutions of the General Assembly, the Council and the Special Committee. A number of organizations have extended or formulated such programmes of assistance from within their own budgetary resources, in addition to their respective contributions as executing agencies of projects funded by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the primary provider of assistance.

7. A number of assistance projects have continued to be funded by UNDP in close collaboration with other agencies and organizations of the United Nations system.

United Nations Development Programme

8. UNDP maintains technical cooperation with the following Non-Self-Governing Territories: Anguilla, British Virgin Islands, Cayman Islands, Montserrat and Turks and Caicos Islands. While the extent and focus of UNDP's programmes vary from one Territory to another, they are all, in general, executed in conformity with UNDP guidelines for the implementation of the Successor Programming Arrangement and relevant decisions of the UNDP Executive Board, particularly those concerning the focus and allocation of assistance under each programming cycle, and with relevant resolutions of the General Assembly.

9. The new thrust of UNDP's Successor Programming Arrangement under the fifth and sixth cycles (1992-1996 and 1997-1999), respectively, with emphasis on the promotion of sustainable human development, continues to be guided by decisions 95/22 and 95/23 of the UNDP Executive Board, which together endorse the following areas for technical cooperation:

(a) Social development and poverty eradication;

(b) Job creation and sustainable livelihoods;

(c) Governance, participation and the empowerment of women;

(d) Protection of the environment and natural resource management.

10. Cooperation between UNDP and the Non-Self-Governing Territories of the Caribbean has also been influenced by the decisions and outcomes of various United Nations conferences, including the Global Conference on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States (1994), the International Conference on Population and Development (1994), the World Summit for Social Development (1995), and the Fourth World Conference on Women (1995).

11. The focus of UNDP's technical cooperation programmes with the Caribbean Non-Self-Governing Territories is determined in full consultation with governmental authorities. The programmes therefore reflect both the established mandates of UNDP and the development priorities, needs and concerns of the Territories.

12. Continuing resource constraints faced by UNDP, particularly during the recent fifth-cycle and current sixth-cycle programmes, have severely restricted its ability to respond more fully to the technical cooperation needs of the Non-Self-Governing Territories of the Caribbean. A common feature of these Territories is their relatively high per capita income levels and the overall high level of human development they have achieved. Despite these achievements, however, they are confronted by a lack of capacity at both the institutional and human resource levels. Their small human resource base precludes any economies of scale in the areas of training and human resource development and also makes the relative cost of administration, government and physical infrastructure, especially in archipelagic Territories, unusually high. Traditionally high rates of emigration, inspired by a variety of factors, serve to compound an already difficult human resource problem for many of the Non-Self-Governing Territories, making them heavily reliant on an expatriate labour force.

13. The openness of the economies and societies of small Non-Self-Governing Territories further compound the difficulties faced by authorities in selecting and applying appropriate and effective policy instruments. The economies and societies of such Territories are heavily susceptible to external shocks and are equally vulnerable to the ravages of both natural and environmental occurrences. These endemic weaknesses combine to revalidate a continuing role for UNDP in the provision of timely, focused and effective technical assistance to Caribbean Non-Self-Governing Territories.

14. However, UNDP's resource limitations have influenced the need to prioritize the allocation of assistance, largely according to the criteria of per capita income, population size and level of development of recipient countries. As of the start of the sixth cycle cooperation framework, therefore, all of the Non-Self-Governing Territories of the Caribbean that maintain technical cooperation programmes with UNDP have attained the status of net contributor countries. Anguilla and the Cayman Islands have been allocated TRAC[1] earmarkings under line 1.1.1 for the sixth cycle of $161,000 and $58,000, respectively, on a transitional, fully reimbursable basis in accordance with paragraph 23 of UNDP Executive Board decision 95/23. Montserrat and the Turks and Caicos Islands have each been allocation TRAC figures under line 1.1.1 of $73,000 and $196,000, respectively, on a fully reimbursable basis, in accordance with paragraph 21 of the same decision. The Territory with no established TRAC is the British Virgin Islands. Cooperation with all of these Territories will have to place considerable emphasis on resource mobilization and cost-sharing.

15. In addition to their TRAC earmarkings, some of the Non-Self-Governing Territories benefit from the Caribbean component of UNDP's Regional Programme for Latin America and the Caribbean. In particular, the British Virgin Islands and the Turks and Caicos Islands will benefit from the expanded ongoing regional disaster response and management project. Benefits will also accrue to the Turks and Caicos Islands under the Support for Policy and Programme Development

and Support for Technical Services frameworks. In addition, given its membership in the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS), Montserrat will continue to benefit, as it did in the fifth cycle, from the Caribbean Multi-Island Programme. So too will Anguilla and the British Virgin Islands, which have received similar benefits in the past, as a result of their associate status with OECS. Access to other facilities, such as the Technical Cooperation Among Developing Countries Programme and the Partners in Development Programme, could also provide benefits for the Territories.

16. Arising from the provisions of the Programme of Action adopted by the global conferences a number of initiatives assigned to UNDP for further development and implementation are expected to be fully operational in the early part of the sixth cycle and will realize benefits for the Non-Self-Governing Territories of the Caribbean. The Small Island Developing States Information Network (SIDSNET) and the Small Island Developing States Technical Assistance Programme (SIDSTAP), conceived to promote and enhance the flow of sustainable development information among small island developing States and to provide technical expertise in addressing gaps in technical assistance needs through exchanges among and between small island developing States and other States, will further enhance the process of integration of the Non-Self-Governing Territories into the global arena. These programmes, whose development began in the latter part of the fifth cycle, are expected to realize tangible benefits for the small island Territories of the Caribbean in the course of the current programme cycle and will contribute to addressing some of the important development policy concerns.

17. UNDP resident representatives assigned to some of the Non-Self-Governing Territories have initiated the establishment of focal points within their Governments. This initiative is intended to strengthen dialogue and promote contact between the Territories, UNDP and the rest of the United Nations system. An expected benefit will be the increase in awareness among officials and the general public of the Non-Self-Governing Territories about the potential for collaboration with the United Nations system. It is also hoped that through such a mechanism, UNDP can play a greater role in providing policy advice and guidance, within its areas of competence, to the authorities of the Territories.

18. UNDP has continued to engage in effective policy dialogue with the Governments of several Caribbean Non-Self-Governing Territories, with a view to determining their most critical policy concerns and recommending ways for effectively utilizing assistance provided by it. These functions have been carried out by UNDP resident representatives. The formulation of appropriate programmes of technical assistance, where they exist, is therefore informed by both the process of consultation and the ongoing review of conditions within each Territory by UNDP. Country programmes were established for several of the Caribbean Non-Self-Governing Territories under the fifth cycle and in most cases, country cooperation frameworks are in the process of being finalized for implementation under the sixth cycle. These policy documents are set within the contexts of UNDP's thematic focus areas and the needs and priorities of the respective Governments. Furthermore, both the country programmes and the country cooperation frameworks, which are normally approved by the UNDP Executive Board, set out in analytical terms the policy issues facing each

Territory from a sustainable human development perspective, along with details of UNDP strategy and focus of its assistance.

19. In addition to its role in all of the aforementioned respects, UNDP also performs the function of maintaining liaison and coordination with other agencies of the United Nations system. This function has often proved necessary in the determination of needs and the delivery of assistance to the Non-Self-Governing Territories, particularly with respect to emergencies.

20. By and large, UNDP's assistance to the Caribbean Non-Self-Governing Territories under the fifth-cycle country programme focused principally on the provision of support for human resource development, capacity-building, institutional strengthening and environment and natural resources management. With this in view, UNDP's proposed strategy at the start of the current sixth cycle has been to continue its emphasis on providing support in these areas, building upon the results of its previous interventions.

21. Although the British Virgin Islands has received no TRAC earmarkings for application in the sixth cycle, it is nonetheless expected that cooperation during the cycle will concentrate on social development and poverty eradication, with a focus particularly on women and children. In addition, some attention will be paid to environment and natural resources management.

22. UNDP's support to Montserrat, which presented a special case for assistance during most of the fifth cycle as a result of an ongoing volcanic eruption, initially focused on the development and implementation of policies and programmes in environment and natural resources management and in strengthening institutional capacity in that area. Some of the efforts were directed towards physical planning, liquid and solid waste management and disaster planning and management. However, the continuing crisis necessitated a complete shift in the direction of external aid towards the provision of emergency relief. UNDP, in addition to supporting critical gaps in the emergency phase, also provided support for longer term resettlement efforts. It is anticipated that the need will continue in much of the current sixth cycle as a consequence of the crisis. The permanent relocation of the capital and a significant proportion of the population to a safer part of the island is envisaged. These severe adverse impacts on the island's economy and society would, more likely than not, require a re-examination by the UNDP Executive Board of Montserrat's status as a net contributor country.

23. In the Turks and Caicos Islands, technical cooperation has been largely aimed at "direct interventions" with a view to laying the basis for meaningful development in its economy. Assistance was granted for the establishment of an investment agency, the creation of a national insurance scheme, and improving customs and administration and tertiary-level education. In the current cycle, support is envisaged in two broad areas: preparation of an integrated development plan, and assistance for the agricultural sector.

24. The Special Committee appreciates the attention given by UNDP to Non-Self-Governing Territories in the Caribbean and hopes that such Territories in the Pacific will be considered in future cycles.

25. The Special Committee wishes to refer to its recent Caribbean Regional Seminar, held in St. John's, Antigua and Barbuda, from 21 to 23 May 1997. UNDP and the World Health Organization participated.

26. Many participants, particularly those from Non-Self-Governing Territories emphasized the need to increase the present programmes of assistance.

27. The conclusions and recommendations of the seminar called for Non-Self-Governing Territories to be included in the programmes and projects of the United Nations system, particularly those envisaged under the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction and other programmes designed to assist small island developing States. The seminar recommended that the Special Committee should review the situation in the Non-Self-Governing Territories with respect to the status of the people's ownership, control and disposal of their resources.

28. In a draft resolution currently under consideration by the Special Committee on the question of Tokelau, the Committee would note with appreciation the collaborative contribution to the development of Tokelau by New Zealand and the specialized agencies and other organizations of the United Nations system, in particular the UNDP and the International Telecommunication Union.

Notes

[1] Target for resource assignment from the core.